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John. H. Badgley

Theravada Buddhism was once the dominant religion on the Indian subcontinent and attained vast influence during the reign of Asoka (273-232 B.C.). But Buddhism was swept from India by a resurgent Hinduism and Theravada monks fled to more hospitable lands to the southeast. The erudite migrants were welcomed in Ceylon immediately and over the next five centuries propagated their religion successfully in the ancient Pyu, Mon and Funan empires. By 600 A. D. the Srivijaya empire of Sumatra and the Malaya peninsula had become a center for Buddhist scholarship, according to the Chinese pilgrim, I-Ching, who studied in the capital for two years. [1]

It was only natural that the political ideas developed in the first Indian Buddhist kingdoms should also be adopted. Whereas the Buddhist missionaries emphasized the pure creed of Gautama Buddha, the political system which they helped establish was greatly influenced by earlier Hindu concepts of Manu, Dhamma, and the worldly notions of the arthashastras. Shivite and Hindu pantheons were included in their cosmological concept of the state. Indeed these ancient ideas apparently had preceded Buddhism in Southeast Asia, but for our purposes the chronology is irrelevant. It is sufficient to note the early mixture of Hindu principles and symbols, then to emphasize that the Theravada customs permeated among the peasantry while the peculiarly Hindu tradition of rule impressed itself upon their governments. By 900 A.D. when the Burman tribes crossed the upper reaches of the Salween and migrated down to the Irrawaddy plain, they encountered the sophisticated Theravada culture of the ancient Mons, a culture and political tradition that had already existed for at least 400 years. By the twelfth century Burmans had assimilated the Mon script, Pali, as well as their religious ideas and the Hindu court customs. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Thai of Nan Chao established their first Theravada kingdoms in the middle and lower reaches of the Menam plain, again assimilating Mon script and the system of government developed by these remarkable people.

1) John Cady, *Southeast Asia* (New York, McGraw Hill, 1964) p.44,

Today in the riverine plains around the Bay of Bengal and the Gulf of Siam there remain four Theravada Buddhist polities. They form a rough quadrangle on the continent. In the south is Cambodia, in the middle is Thailand and Laos, and to the north is Burma. Ceylon forms a fifth member of the Buddhist group and South Vietnam claims a limited cultural influence. Therefore historically and currently Burma represents only one of many Theravada polities that have flourished in the region.

The political significance of Theravada is that its associated political structure and ethical codes have provided authority for rulers. Robert Heine-Celdern defined the Theravada political system as a microcosmos with explicit cosmic roles played by monarchs and the eternal microcosmos, the universe. Rituals and regalia associated with government were drawn from Indian Buddhist and Brahman principles of cosmic order. The state and its rulers became worldly manifestations of the cosmos and of Buddha.

> In order to realize how deeply the populations... were affected by the cosmological structure of the state one need only think of the division of the Siamese people into the classes of the right and of the left which, not long ago, determined the services each person was obliged to render to the state. Moreover it must not be forgotten that the cosmo-magic principle as applied to the state really forms only part of a much wider complex and resulted from a conception of the universe and of human existence which regulated, and to a large extent still regulates, also the private lives of individuals. When in Siam and Cambodia people wore clothes of different color on different days of the week according to the color ascribed to the planet for whom the day is named, or when in Burma before any important undertaking they examine their horoscope and the lore of lucky days, or when they kneel down for prayer on that side of the pagoda which in the cosmological system corresponds to the planet of the weekday on which they were born, they act on the same principle which governed the structure of their empires, their ideas of kingship and the ritual of their royal courts. It is clear then that the cosmo-magic ideas, until a very recent past, had an extremely strong hold on the minds of the people.[2]

The Theravada tradition was clearly founded upon a central value system which, as it was diffused, tended to integrate diverse communities. The religion, writing system, and principles of government helped to create a similar outlook, or world view,

2) Robert Heine-Geldern, *Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia*. Ithaca (Cornell University, Data Paper 18, April 1956) p.11.

among an exceedingly heterogenous people. For example, the Buddhist principle of *majjhima patipada*, or the middle way, became a basis upon which compromise of political interests or military ambitions could be based. Political authority devolved upon a human being through physical objects associated with Gautama Buddha's previous lives. A monarch's unbrella, a white elephant, even a name believed to have been used by Buddha in a previous existence, were manifestations of sovereignty, or the ultimate secular authority. The Jataka tales of the Buddha's 550 lives were often used as sanction for physical attributes or astrological relationships associated with kingship. Individuals in possession of sanctioned objects, appearances, or astrological manifestations came to hold ascribed power. Thus the right to rule, to cause others to obey one's will, was rationalized in religious or metaphysical terms.

The more universal institutions of government—military protection against invasion or insurrection, collection of taxes or labor services through an officialdom, and the dispensing of justice through a judicial administration—these functional institutions also gained authoritative sanction through Theravada Buddhism. Associated with the Buddhist scripture, the *Tripikita*, were secular writings, translations and commentaries on the classic Indian *dhammashastras* and *rajanitis* (codes of law and principles or rulership). The Buddhist clergy, the *sangha*, offered up the intellectuals who translated and modified the foreign codes into ethical statements of considerable influence within the Theravada polities. A normative pattern of thought evolved that became characteristic of the people. Scholars have long debated about the actual influence of formal Buddhism upon the populace, and centainly recent research has proved that a wide range of belief exists within each of the contemporary polities;[3] nevertheless a traditional political process did evolve that continues to have profound meaning to most Buddhists in the region. The grandiose achievements of the monarchs, the stupas, pagodas and *wats*, are eloquent evidence of that process. The monuments at Pagan, Ayuthia, Angkor-wat, or Pegu are symbols of vast human enterprise, as significant in their day of the value system of a people as are jet fleets and nuclear power today. The

3) Robert L. Slter, *Paradox and Nrvana* (1951), pp.13-17; R.F. Spear, "he Syncretism of Animism and Buddhism in Burma," (Unpublished Master's thesis, Northwestern University); J.A. Stewart, *Journal of Burma Research Society*, XIII, (1923), p.75; also the Census Reports from Burma in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and M. H. Bode, *The Pali Literature of Burma* (1909), p.30. A recent careful study by John Brohm, ["Buddhism and Animism in Burmese Village" *Journal of Asian Studies*, (vol YYIII, No.1 November 1963)] supports this assumption within Burman villages, where animistic *beliefs* are widely shared.

details of the historic governmental process are slowly being pieced together as inscriptions and archeological finds are unearthed.

Perhaps the most startling characteristic of the governmental process was its weak administration. The successive polities which created the melange of ruins in Southeast Asia usually rose and collapsed as dynasties within two centuries. Bureaucracy never flourished as in Han China, Tokugawa Japan, or Islamic India, yet basic values of the people lived on despite dynastic chaos. New rulers secured authority by appealing to the same principles of Theravada authority.

> The theory of divine incarnation, and even more so that of rebirth and of Karma, provided an easy subterfuge for usurpers. The fact that the relatively easy task of seizing the palace, as in Burma and Siam, or of seizing the regalia, as in certain parts of Indonesia, often sufficed to be accepted as king by the whole nation, and was bound to act as an additonal incitement to rebellion.[4]

There was inherent in the Theravada political system an anarchic tradition which prevented development of bureaucracy, the most stabilizing element in any state. Furthermore, it prevented establishment of any significant empire as in Asoka India or in China. Theravada intellectuals were monks, not civil servants, and secular bureaucracy was limited to the aristocracy. The unique thrust of Theravada ethics was away from organizational behavior. Leaders, not groups or consolidated organization, earned authority through their merit from previous lives. *Karma*, as perceived by Theravada Buddhists, militated against not only class and caste, but also against organization generally. The leader born with great merit could recruit a vast following, but his demise usually marked the end of his organization. Succession to the throne always was a fundamental problem for the polities, except in Thailand where the Chakri dynasty beginning with King Rama I in 1782 tentatively resolved the problem.

A stabilizing factor compensating for the political upheavals in the capital was the Pali language with its ancient literature and powers of logic and description. Pali and the community of scholars who mastered it, the *sangha*, transmitted not only the complex belief system which undergirded the polity but also performed key functions at the village level to create a political equilibrium. Pali was secularized in modern Burmese, Cambodian, Laoetian, Sinhalese, and Thai languages. It became the basis for the folklore and the means of recording the great achievements of province leaders

4) Heine-Geldern, *loc. cit.*

as well as kings and their ministers. For example in Kinmon monastary, fifty miles west of Mandalay, is an inscription on a black limestone slab, similar to several thousand such tablets found along the rivers of the Theravada region. The language of the inscription is Burmese, but many of the terms are in Pali, terms which then as today connoted permanence and sacredness. Freely translated we read:

> This monastary was built by Myothugyi Min Tra Pya (district headmen) from Sagaing, born in this village of Kinmon. Min Tra Pya does charity by providing the fields to support this *paya* (home of Buddha). People from distant lands, Pagan, Nyaungòo, Sradritiya (near modern Prome), and Thaton will come to worship this paya. This *paya* will be widely known because the donor was close to the king of Burma and always loyally served the king. Under this donor are many *ywathugyi* (village headman), *sitbo* (cavalry officers), *kalan* (recruiters), as well as his parents, relatives, and other peoples who served him for their welfare. (signed 694 Burmese Era or 1332 A.D.).[5]

Such inscriptions were not only a record of achievements, but more fundamentally they recorded a political ethic of the way in which a powerful leader should behave. It is relevant that the man left no heritage of secular power, a dukedom or fief at least to his offspring; rather we learn that the attained goal of rulership by earnned merit is disposed to the Buddha, returning power to the original source of enlightment. In short, power was believed to be not transferable by human means, rather an individual acquired power through his *karma*. The high value placed upon the concept of merit was conserved through the centuries in the durable Pali inscriptions,

In addition to such inscriptions. and of even greater importance to us, were the less durable Pali *pei* (palm leaf manuscripts) and *parabek is* (rice paper manuscripts). These manuscripts carried a continuous discourse among monastaries and between monastaries and the court. Specific issues in political philosophy and ethics were discussed in commentaries on the *dhammathats* and *nitis*. On the issue of political authority within a Burman district, for example, there developed three types of political leader, each or whom exercised different rights. During the reign of Mindon (1852-1878) the following record was compiled.

> A *ywasa* (village ruler) is appointed by the king and if he lives within his own village he will also be *thugyi* (headman) of that village. Should he be asked to serve near the king the *ywasa* can appoint another man as *thugyi*

5) Translated for the author by Maha Thera U Ottama Buddhi of Monywe Village.

in his village. The *ywasa* can also appoint a *myothugyi* (district headman) but must share this right with those of higher rank, the *wungyi* (palace minister), *myosa* (district governor), *myowun* (governor's adviser), and *kayeinwun* (sub-district governor, these four ranks were usually drawn from the aristocracy). The *ywas* has the obligation to collect taxes and must return a predetermined percentage to the higher officers.

A *ywathugui* (village headman) may be appointed by the king, the king's ministers, the district governor or his advisers, or by a *ywasa*. If the *ywathugyi* is considered to be a powerful man among the villagers, he will be appointed by the king however he will have little obligation towards the king. If the family of the *thugyi* remain loyal to the king, however, the *thugyi* may appoint his son and his son's son as *thugyi* of the same village. Through such an appointment the *thugyi* may retain most of the village revenue for himself, sending only token gifts to the king. He also has absolute power to settle disputes within his village.

A *ywathugyi* considered to be a weak leader will pe appointed by a *ywasa* or *myosa*. If he has little quality, he may not have the right of life and death over his people but must appeal cases to higher officers. He must also turn over a large portion of his revenue to the king's officers.[6]

Most discussions of government were not as specific as the foregoing, however the function of the Buddhist monk as scribe and commentator on the political scene was of fundamental importance. Without Pali, and its derivative modern languages, such an authoritative code could not have developed. In that event it is highly likely that the Burmans would have remained in the primitive condition of neighboring hill tribes. On the basis of these codes and discussions Theravada polities developed a system of values which placed man in the universe and more particularly, prescribed ideal relations between the individual and the family, the local leader and his community, and the king and his polity. This value system accounts for the distinctiveness of the Theravada polities on the world scene, if not for their differences from one another.

Admittedly we cannot generalize about the strength of the Theravada Buddhist tradition as a determinant in the five states where it is influential today. The societies and governments are very dissimilar due to different racial character, invasions, and geography. Furthermore, the period of European colonization arbitrarily divided the

6) Extracted from *Raseinda Yasawaya Panda Ni* (Monywe Kyaung, vol3, n.d.,) and *Thathana Bahuthuta Pa Kathni* (Monywe Kyaung, n.d., p.175.)

elites from the bulk of the people because of westernization. The colonial experience in Burma and Ceylon was most unlike that of Laos and Cambodia. British colonial administration penetrated down to village level whereas the French, who developed a loyal elite with a strong French cultural orientation, scarcely touched the village administration among the modern Theravada states. Thailand, of course, was not colonized at all and enjoyed strong central leadership from King Mongkut onwards thus creating a third type of administration among the modern Theravada states.

Empirical evidence with comparative value is being rapidly accumulated and soon we will be able to synthesize existing research findings on these five states to develop a comparison of the political process among them. We can then generalize about the area as a regional political system. In this book however our concern is not to compare but to analyze the priority of values within Burma. With the preceding comments as an introduction to the general political system that evolved within the Theravada polities, consider now the structure of political authority in monarchial Burma.

THE STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN MONARCHIAL BURMA

In Burma we cannot speak of a single national authority in the same sense as we would for Thailand since the founding of the Chakri dynasty in 1782. Communalism has been a constant political factor, even between Buddhist Arakanese, Mons, Shans and Burmans who shared the same cosmological system of government. Communities that had no written language or universalistic religion, notably the Karens, Kachins, and Chins, scarcely participated at all within the Burman political process. Nevertheless these minorities had their political life. Their distinct spoken language, dress, and customs in addition to their racial differences caused the traditional divisions to persist through the centuries. The dynamic quality of these divisions forced the Burmese monarchs to function as leaders of an alliance rather than masters of a kingdom. It was only the exceptional ruler who gained enough power to drive his armies through the encirclement of minority communities to invade Ayuthia or Laos, as Bayinnaung did in the sixteenth century, or into Manipur as Konbaung kings did two centuries later.

Through lack of an imperial bureaucracy the Burmese monarchs, like the monarchs of all Theravada polities depended heavily upon their aristocracy (an extended kinship

system) to function as a pseudo-bureaucracy. Indeed, marriage was a key link between the court and lesser proto-kings among Shans, Mons, and Arakanese. This kin relationship was sanctioned by the cosmological concept Heine-Geldren described which called for four major queens and a host of lesser consorts. Such an authoritative institution had a negative dimension for it produced a multitude of contenders for the throne, half-brothers of the future king,[7] but more positively it served to give at least a semblance of unity to diverse ethnic groups and competing aristocratic families. Sisters, aunts, daughters, and even wives of monarchs from surrounding polities found their way into the Burman court, transforming it into a truly Burmese imperial dynasty under the successful kings. The monarchial kinship-via-marriage system remained so imporatant in the nineteenth century that Burma's last king, Thibaw, lost power primarily because he failed to put his marital relationships in order.[8] Both mentally and physically a weak individual, Thibaw refused to assert his monarchial authority and appoint queens to fill vacancies within the court. His mother, a far more ambitious and powerful person, skillfully exploited her son's paranoid fears by dismissing potential rivals to her postition as political threats, which of course they were, to her. However stronger monarchs, like Alaungsithu (1113-1167), Bayinnaung (1551-1581), and Mindon (1852-1878) used the kinship relationship to excellent political advantage. The profound weakness of the system was its failure to rationalize succession to the throne.

During periods of disturbance and even anarchy in the court, residual power within the Burmese empire returned to the town and even village level. There a different type of political authority existed, sanctioned by institutions which will be described later. Aspirant kings gained authority essentially through two types of sanctions: usurper-occult and hereditary-legal. Variations of these types often appeared, but by analysis we can demonstrate the characteristics of each type.

Usurper-Occult Monarch

The usurper-occult king in Burma was frequently the founder of a new dynasty,

7) Every succession to the throne was characterized by political instability See Hall, *Burma, passim* and Cady, *A History of Modern Burma*, Chapter One. Actually, the discussion of alliances between royalty within Theravada political system remains highly subjective. Evidence is overwhelming that marriage formed a key link in political relations but the detailed analysis of how this institution functioned remains to be completed. An interesting comparison can be made with the function of mariage in Japan during the feudal period. See. S.A. Sadler's biography, *Tokugawa Ieyasu.*

8) Cady, *Southeast Asia*, p.391.

although assassination of legitimate monarchs and assumption of his throne by usurpers was also a common phenomenon. Since the eleventh century eight dynasties appeared in various parts of Burma, in addition to the tiny Shan polities. These major dynasties were Pagan 1044-1287, Pegu 1287-1526, Pinya Shan 1298-1364, Sagaing 1315-64, Ava 1364-1555, Toungoo 1486-1752, Mrohaung Arakanese 1404-1782, and Alaungpaya (Konbaung) 1752-1885.[9] During these dynastic periods lesser monarchs established themselves for short periods at Martaban, Moulmein, and Prome but their rule was scarcely recorded. What is important for our purposes is the use made of occultism, or *lokipanna*, by dynastic founders and thier prophets who used this magic to sanction the new rulers.

Analysis of *lokipanna* as a political institution is founded upon the research of occultism by Dr. Than Tun. He notes six types of *lokipanna* used to foretell future action (in addition to seven kinds of magic used to influence the future). Our concern is with the predictive institution for it was the basis for the political authority of an aspirant king who found himself, unfortunately, a common man of ordinary birth but with great ambitions. The would-be usurper or his supporters could appeal to astrology to establish a relationship between his own quest for power and celestial movements; or, analogy (*atit*) based on the observed behavior of a peculiar person or creature, could be used to predict the future; intuition (*namit*) by a clairvoyant person (*natgadaw*) was acceptable basis for prophesy; a folksong (*tabhoon*) sung by a minstrel or passing peasant could be an authoritative reference; an unseen voice (*canan*) could be authoritative in conveying future events; an unusual phenomenon (*bhawo*), such as smoke from a pagoda spire or a group of comets, could forecast catastrophe for existing rulers; and even, a written history of the future (*suik*), usually prepared by a Brahman adviser to the court, was a very useful sanction for political action against the regime.[10]

One or more of these *lokipanna* phenomena were cited as authority for the action of usurpers. The most careful documentation we have concerning this institution is the Saya San rebellion of 1930-32. In that instance Saya San, an ex-monk from the village of Alaungpaya (the headman who founded the last Burmese dynasty), gained national prominence and some influence through his leadership in the General Council

9) D.G.E. Hall, *History of Southeast Asia* (London, MacMillan, 2 ed. 1964) pp.867-870.
10) Than Tun, "The Influence of Occultism", mimeograph, 1955. pp.1-2.

of Burmese Associations. But Saya San had even more important credentials. An important *bhawo* symbol had been seen in his youth, that was smoke rising from a field in which he walked. Secondly, his horoscope was auspicious according to reliable astrologers. As a monk he seems to have read the famous Jagaru Natcakron Suilk, written by a Brahman during the reign of Thalun (1629-48) which predicted events down to 1956. A severe conflict was foreseen in 1931 with a usurper foreign king. Other *lokipanna* may have been noted by his followers, at any rate on October 28, at 11: 33 PM, Saya San became king of Burma, Thupannaka Galon Raja. He sanctioned his rule with the correct regalia, a palace location on the proper north-south and east-west axis, and four queens symbolizing the unity of his rule.[11]

Saya San was only the most prominent of a succession of aspirant monarchs who rebelled against the British during their occupation. In 1928 U Rathe Bandaha led a revolt in north central Burma and over the proceeding four decades no less than a dozen self-proclaimed monarchs fought for the throne. Some of the preceptive British civil servants recognized these futile struggles as something more than anomic, anti-social behavior by gangs, but until Dr. Than Tun's analysis even contemporary Burmese writers failed to see the moral justification hidden in the occult tradition for this recurrent political violence.

The tradition of usurpation had been institutionalized in Burma and became a legitimate method of gaining the throne centuries before the British came on the scene. Alaungpaya, a village headman, and founder of the Konbaung Dynasty, seized the throne from the Mon rulers in Pegu after convincing his fellow villagers that he possessed super-human properties. Bayinnaung, the most eminent of the Toungoo manarchs, started from equally humble beginnings and rose to influence through his skill as a general under the king, then used lokipanna sanction when he was named by his predecessor as king. In Arakan, Thiri Thudhamma, king at the time of Father Manrique's long sojourn in the seventeenth century, was so concerned about a suik which predicted his death the year after his coronation, that he delayed the coronation for twelve years, then at the suggestion of a Moslem occult artist had an elixer of 6,000 human hearts made to sustain him. The elixer evidently failed for he was assassinated the following year.[12] Indeed all the available evidence supports the thesis that both

11) Maurice Collis, *Trials In Burma* (London, Faber and Faber, re-issued 1953) p.213.
12) Collis, *Land of the Great Image* (London, Faber and Faber, 1942) pp.245-253.

usurpers and legitimate inheritors of the throne were greatly influenced by the magic phenomena encompassed by the institution of *lokipanna*.

Hereditary-Legal Monarch

The major dynasties of Burma however were perpetuated by a more stable and universal system of succession, that was inheritance. This was conceptualized in the term *einshemin* (heir apparent). Every monarch had the right to name his successor. This was ensured through the formal source of legitimacy for the monarch's office, contained in the *dhammathats*.

Originally derived from the *Dharmashastra* tradition in ancient India, the *dhammathats* were the constitution, the norms to which the king and his councillors, the wungyis, referred for guidance and used as authority when they cited the reason for decisions. However the *dhammathats*, like a written constitution, were not prescriptions but only guides for government. Once in office it was within the king's prerogative to select the particular *dhammathat* he chose to follow. As a code of law it gave the king's power the necessary sanction for a Buddhist public who understood the *dhammathats* to be a part of their philosophic system.

The Constitutional Basis For The Monarch

Of more value for day to day sanction of governmental action were the *nitis*, writings concerned with proper conduct. These were codified principles dealing with specific responsibilities that went with such social roles as wife, husband, and slave as well as political roles played by rulers. Unlike the *dhammathats*, the *nitis* were written as temporal interpretations of ideal-relationships between people and between subjects and ruler. The notion of "ideal" carried a metaphysical weight to it and we must conclude that the formal political authority of the king and his councillors arose from the mystical tenets of their religion. The ethical codes assumed that political activity was an obligation upon rulers, but that it had no inherent virtue. The virtues of patience, humility, liberality, toleration, and self-restraint were extolled for all, the individual was advised to observe the norms of his community and aspire to ideal relationships with his parent, spouse, relative, friend, or teacher; but the community or society were not ends in themselves. Both rulers and subjects performed good deeds for personal merit, not because of social value.

The *nitis*, therefore, encouraged no criticism or personal evaluation of government action. Evaluation of political activity was the duty of the king and his officials alone.

The *dhammathats* and *nitis* both functioned as revelations of natural law. Just as a ruler could reveal truth, through the ascribed status of his role, so he could nominate his successor without reference to any public body. Statues and successors were both proposed by the monarchs advisers, but only the monarch was entitled to prescribe law and succession. No institution evolved whereby the king or his rule could be sanctioned by other people. Particularly ineffective or despotic monarchs might lose the throne if too many villagers were aroused by their errors and set about finding *lokipanna* evidence to sanction a new ruler, but the only formal source of legitimacy for the king's office rested in the Hindu-originated *dhammathats* and the Brahman court customs passed down through the centuries.

EVOLUTION OF THE MONARCHIAL CONSTITUTION AS A FUNCTIONAL SYSTEM

What was the political function of these moralist codes, or stated another way, what caused the persistence of these ancient sanctions and what was their effect upon Burma's political history? No scholar has examined the historically extant Burmese laws and codes of conduct with the object of relating them to a unique political constitution. One obvious fact that we have observed from Burma's history, as with the political history of the other Theravada polities, was the consistent collapse of dynasties and the failure of a bureaucratic system to evolve. It is usually asserted that the cause for the multiple divisions in Southeast Asia's political structure was geography, racial migrations, colonial invasions, and even climate. Might we not add to the list the factor of the Hindu-Buddhist political process which, as it evolved particularly in Burma, created political communities with no secularized government or administrative system. It was the metaphysical and cosmological foundation of Buddhist morality that monarchs ruled by, not a bureaucracy and a system of positive law. But before pressing this point too vigorously, consider the history of the Burmese monarchial constitutional system.

The record of traditional political thought began for the Burmese in the sixth century A. D., during the Pyu period, when the Burmans were still a tribal hill people migrating down into the northern Irrawaddy plain. Theravada monks, with the approval

of the Pyu court (then at Sriksetra near the modern city of Prome), emigrated from southern India or Ceylon and introduced the major Buddhist commentaries. The writings of Buddhaghosa, Dhammapala, and others appear in references to the period on inscriptions. These mendicants founded the *sangha*, as well as an orthodox system of religious thought that has survived up to the present. The Pyus produced no writers of their own but their intellectual heritage was passed on to the more powerful Mon community that controlled southeast Burma and western Siam between 700 and 1,000 A. D. The Mon were extremely successful in retaining the spirit of Theravada and the Singhalese *sangha* engaged in constant intercourse through missions and resident study with the Mon mendicants.[13]

The Burman period began in 1057-1058 with the successful invasion of the Mon kingdom by the Burman leader, Cansu I or Anawratha. Mon culture was seized upon by the Burmans, including their form of Buddhism. Thereafter the center of intellectual activity shifted to the Burman *sangha*. Anawratha sent monks to Ceylon to bring back original texts and received teachers from the Singhalese *sangha* in his court. His work was carried on by a successor in the next century, Cansu III or Narapati-sithu, who encouraged research and study of the Pali scriptures as well as other forms of cultural expression.[14] Religious scholarship flourished to such an extent in the Burman capital, Pagan, that monks from Ceylon began traveling there to study.

13) The tasks of the king had been a subject in early Jain and Buddhist philosophic writings. A number of tracts on the Ideal King are extant from ancient India. See de Bary, *Sources of Indian Tradition* (1958), from Mahaviracaita and Nitivakyamirta, pp.86-92; also Digha Nikaya, pp.136-143. These undoubtedly influenced the first Burmese writings on the subject. Scattered references to the ideal role are to be found in U Tin and Gordon Luce, *The Glass Palace Chronicle* (1923). A recent discussion of the monarch's traditional obligations is that of Htin Fatt. "Contemporary Burmese Culture," *The Guardian* (July, 1956).

14) The most influential of the *nitis*, the *Lokaniti*, is still taught in monasteries and public schools. It was compiled by a Burman minister, Caturangabala, in the reigh of Thihathu during the fourteenth century. The work is a basic text for the course on civic duty (*pyithuniti*) and has been summarized by Htin Fatt, *op. cit.*, p.26, as "teaching that society is one big family living in harmony under the leadership of a ruler [and prescribing] a course of human conduct leading to the formation of an ideal state where the ruler and the ruled live in perfect harmony." This *niti* seems particularly concerned with the evilness of a royal desire for absolute power. Besides the *Lokaniti* the *Canakya niti* and the *Rajaniti* of Canamissaka are still references for Burmese. The *dhammathats* compiled during the latter of the 10th century and in the period from 1750 to the coming of the British are extremely influential in the courts of law. See *Principles of Modern Burmese Buddhist Law*, written and edited by S.C. Lahiri (6th ed., 1957), pp.3-5. He lists 36 codes referred to in modern courts. These deal primarily with marriage, inheritance, and divorce. *A Digest of Burmese Buddhist Law*, compiled by es-Kinwun Mingyi U Gaung and a five-volume compendium of moral and political tracts, *Myama Min Gakehok Pon Sadan*, edited by Pagan Wundauk U Tin, form the basis for most of the comments about traditional political and legal literature.

But five generations of rulers passed from the scene before we find any record of an original contribution to Burmese Buddist law. In 1174, at a monastery near modern Rangoon, the Mon mendicant Sariputta composed the Dhammavilasa in Burmese during his last years. His biography, a portion of which is quoted below, provides insights into the significance of the *sangha* as a political bond which maintained the king's authority over the various communities.

> He was still a novice when he went to Pagan... and received the *upasampada* ordination (highest clerical award) from the *thera* (monk or *pongyi* in Burmese) Ananda, one of the four who had accompanied Chapata returning from Ceylon. Being thus inducted into the Sihalasanga, Sariputta could claim to be in the direct line of descent... from the ancient teachers of the Mahavihara. He became one of the leaders of the sect. It is said that the king heard of the aged monk's learning and holiness and thought of appointing him royal preceptor, but before summoning Sariputta he sent some court officials to find out what manner of man he was. When they returned and described him as extremely old and feeble... Narapati was unwilling to put on him the labour and fatigue of being the king's *acariya* (adviser), and contented himself with honouring the *thera* in other ways. Sariputta was afterwards sent to his native country to purify religion there, which means that he has to represent the Sihalasangha in the south. This was duly done by Sariputta, who settled at Dala and handed on the Mahavihara tradition to his pupils... It is difficult to distinguish his religious works (if he composed any) from those of the other Sariputtas of that epoch. His most interesting work... is one of the earliest law codes of Burma.[15]

A more pervasive set of laws was compiled a hundred years later, in 1280 for the Mon king Wagaru. This work was translated into Pali in the sixteenth century, and again in the seventeenth, only the second time it contained additional material based on the court legal decisions. Sariputta's was revised at about the same time as the *Wagaru* text to include passages from the Dhammapada Pali scripture. In the latter half of the eighteenth century original codes, incorporating ancient prescriptions from the sanskrit Hindu Code of Manu, were approved by the king Alungpaya and called Manu Yin

15) See M.H. Bode's *The Pali Literature of Burma* (1909), pp.59-60., and Nihar-Ranjan Ray, *Theravada Buddhism in Burma* (1946). An article in the *Journal of the Siam Society* by Robert Lingat, "Evolution of the Conception of Law in Burma and Siam", (January, 1950) illucidates some additional issues. A major work on this period by Professor Gordon Luce, based on the inscriptions of Burma, is in preparation.

and Manu Kye—the latter being composed only in Burmese. Numerous legal texts appeared thereafter although it was the Manu Kye, translated into English in 1847, that served as the basis for British application of Buddhist law during the colonial period. Throughout the entire monarchial period Burmese *dhammathats* and Pali scripture remained closely identified.

There was change however in the gradual development of an indigenous law code, founded on primordial values.

The first insight into the rising influence of customary over the doctrinaire norms within the legalistic framework of law borrowed from Brahmanic codes was gained by Sir John Jardine and his protege, Emil Forchhammer. Forchhammer examined some of the earlier texts and compared the *Wagaru Dhammathat* closely with ancient Brahman *Dharmashastras*. He claimed a predominant influence for the Indian element but noted one radical difference between the Brahmanic and Burmese Buddhist codes. The sacredotal features, based on Vedic interpretations of eternal law, were absent from the *Wagaru* and the theory of punishment was consequently based on the doctrine of *kharma* rather than a social order, or obligation, to inflict violence on the offender. "The spirit ot Buddhist ethics permeated the *dhammathats* and supplied the place of those religious sanctions which we can hardly imagine absent from an Indian legal text."[16]

More recently scholars have emphasized the lack of Brahmanic rites and traditions in the *dhammathats*, and have noted that they incorporated only provisions dealing with the administration of justice (*vyavahara*) and codified these under eighteen types of civil law expounded in the Code of Manu.[17] As additional texts have been compared and translated in the past fifty years, we can now be certain that customary norms were more influential than the Brithish colonial government realized. Some now argue that the concept of a *dhammathat* was adopted only to lend sanction to the *lokipanna* traditions already believed by Burmese.[18] We can be certain that beliefs in *lokipanna* were primordial values as such and are certainly significant today in Burma, particularly the institution of *nat* worship, an animistic rite.

There can be no doubt but that the Burmese Buddhist community accepted the *dhammathat* and *niti* institutions, but the content of their normative legal system, like

16) Bode, *op. cit*, p.33.
17) *Ibid.*
18) See Sir John Jardine, *Notes on Buddhist* (1882, reprint 1903).

Buddhism itself, was modified to fit their primordial philosophy which was based on a small agrarian community ethic. It evolved no institution resembling a secular bureaucracy exercising a code of positive laws.

The Function of the Aristocracy As a Bureaucracy

If, as the historic evidence indicates, no secular bureaucracy evolved under the kings, what institution fulfilled the administrative function? An embryonic aristocracy did develop within the stronger dynasties. These men and women, usually related to the king, had influence in choosing successors, in the administration of taxation, in conscription for labor and military forces, and over judicial activity. However, a nobleman's authority could be nullified through the king's power to create and dissolve titles. This power was often exercised in Burma, especially after a usurper succeeded to the throne. The practice of dissolving titles weakened the countervailing strength of the aristocracy. It also contributed to the cleavage between the center and the village communities by encouraging the territorial governor, the *myowun*, who was of the aristocracy, to look upward for his source of power as well as his authority rather than down to a particular community of people or a province.

The prevailing notion of political authority therefore held the institutions of government apart from the populace. Peasants, aristocrats, and the king alike viewed the monarchial right to rule as stemming from a mystical association between the office of the ruler and the eternal truths. All were obliged to pay homage to the office and risked losing merit if they failed to observe their duty as prescribed in the prevailing *nitis*.

THE BURMESE POLITICAL COMMUNITY

The district center, the *myo* (other terms were used in Shan and Arakanese territory but the concept was comparable), was the point of confrontation between the aristocracy and the villagers. The *myo-wun* (district governor) generally maintained a continuous residence while serving as the king's agent. He was the superior of the *myo-thugyi* who was leader of a powerful family in the village community. The duties that the central government asked villagers to perform, whether paying taxes or contributing levies, were often not directly relevant to local needs. Work for the government could be unpleasant, under militant kings both by its nature and because it seldom

contributed in an immediate sense to the welfare of the local community. The administration of law at the *myo* level or in the court was so expensive as to be prohibitive for all but the wealthiest villagers.[19] The following quotation from a *myo-thougyi* record of the eighteenth century summarizes the duties and relative position of the populace and their local leader.

> Regarding Military duties, Judicial receipts, Treasury dues, lost elephants and horses, stray buffaloes, and oxen I have to make enquiry as *Myothugyi* and submit half the proceeds to the *Myosa*, the other half is my perquisite. If there is no *Myosa* half the judicial fees, military dues, cash revenue and betel-nut must be presented to the Royal Treasury.[20]

In view of the unpleasantness associated with government, it is not difficult to understand why it was evaluated as an evil by the peasant, an attitude sustained by the Buddhist precept that famine, flood, fire, disease, and rulers are mankind's greatest enemies.

The concept of duty supported the division of labor that developed early in the history of the Burman kingdom. Groups of villages, *athin*, became responsible for certain crops, products by artisans such as plows or cloth, and service obligations like custom collection on rivers, or the manufacture of weapons for the king's army.

THE IMPACT OF TWO POLITICAL AUTHORITIES

Political authority below the level of the *myo* and particularly within the village, *ywa*, was founded upon public approval and service. It was part of a value structure derived from custom and personal knowledge. The noun *athi*, knowledge, is very similar to the word for community or association, *athin*. It is significant that within the *athin*, government and politics, as traditional activities, were alien and unwanted. The king's authority, founded on supremely revealed code of law, was made effective without reference to the public within the *athin*. Between these two political authorities lay a gap that was not bridged in traditional society.

There is some amount of break in every political entity between the rulers and

19) Lingat, *loc. cit.* and Ray, *loc. cit.* Robert L. Slater, in *Paradox and Nirvana* (1951), discusses in some detail the influence of custom upon Buddhist Theravada codes.
20) Lingat, *op. cit.*, pp. 16 ff.

the ruled,[21] but in other societies the function of a continuous political authority was filled by a hierarchical rulership of some variety. First the church and then the feudal system of Western Europe, as in Japan and provincial Russia, maintained the kingdom's authority. The extended family system in clan and caste societies performed the same function in India while a modification of clan and feudal rulership in China, through the litarati and great families contributed to an interaction of opinion and sanction. There was in Burma, however, a fragmentation in political life among the various *myo* and between the capital and the villages. Burma's last great king, Mindon, recognized this great weakness in the Theravada political process, as did Mongkuk of Siam, and both initiated administrative forms. But Mindo died before he could become effective and his successor allowed the innovations to collapse.

Lack of a continuous political or administrative institution between village and court is the most striking feature of the political community in old Burma. As we have just noted, the monarchial constitutional system floundered at this level of reality. The only men expected to communicate with the center were the government officials and the Buddhist mendicants, through their *sangha*. There was no regular channel to inform the king of facts and opinions that were in his own interest. A villager could have direct access to the king; but from the village community up to the court there was no political institution, only a religious association, the *sangha*, with a continuous line of communication. There were actually often two or more Buddhist sects competing for influence within the *sangha* and each of these seems to have resolved the break in authority between the center and the village. Every village had one or more monasteries and an erudite or ambitious male villager could move up, by examination, to a position of considerable influence within one of the sects.[22] Otherwise, the ambitious or socially-

21) Lingat, *ibid*, p. 28 ff. He makes an interesting comparison with Thailand where the king held the same power but exercised it only rarely. The aristocracy, he claims, consequently exercised more constant and formidable power here.

22) With the general term village community I refer to the grouping of villages within a villages tract as the term is used in Burma or India today. The Burmese term *ywa* (village) and *myo* (rural or province town) are key descriptors of a perso's home community today. Two additonal administrative terms, *taik* and *tan* are also used but less frequently. *Tan* meant a block division within a *ywa*, *taik* most often was used as an administrative unit between the *ywa* and *myo*, equivalent to sub-district. The meaning of all four terms is modified to fit a formal bureaucratic hierachy. This analysis draws upon the Burmese revenue records of 1783, 1802, and 1803 included as an appendix of J.S. Furnivall's *Introduction to the Political Economy of Burma* Rangoon, 3rd ed., 1931 p p. 227-243. See also John Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy to the Court of the Court of Ava*, **1829** (1829), p. 403; Henry Yule, *A Narrative of the Mission to the Court of Ava*, **1855** (1858), p. 253; and Taw Sein Ko, *Burmese Sketches* (1913), p. 302.

conscious individual who wished to make his opinion effective outside of his local community had to create a personal following with the use of *lokipanna* magic.

We have seen that in the village, politics was not the same concept as politics above the *myo*. Village political authority was particularist and rested upon primordial values peculiar to the locale.

The concept of primordial values introduced by Geertz is very descriptive of the Burmese situation.

> The network of primordial alliance and opposition is a dense, intricate but yet precisely articulated one, the product, in most cases, of centuries of gradual crystallization. The unfamiliar civil state, born yesterday from the meager remains of an exhausted colonial regime, is superimposed upon this fine-spun and lovingly conserved texture of pride and suspicion and must somehow contrive to weave it into the fabric of modern politics.[23]

Local authority apparently was, (for it is still) based on custom which gained political significance because authority was exercised by men within the village community whose family was of high status, and who were esteemed for their age, experience, and character. The headman, elders, and monks each held positions of trust and one or the other were references in conflicts of interest.[24] Their approval was the only sanction needed for public acts within the local community.

The community of a village, or circle of villages in this dry plain of Central Burma was maintained by family leaders. They were aware of what is fundamental to politics, that is, compromise and reconciliation. Paradoxically, acting from a sense of such awareness was not considered "political" in rural areas. Cooperative action within the community they believed to be a Buddhist virtue, based on the concept of *majjhima patipada* (the middle way) of Buddhist ethics.

Today the Burmese word for politics, *naing nga yeh*, is rarely used at the village level for their own politics. It is reserved for the more dramatic intention to seek power at higher levels through a party, national organization, or the professions. There

23) Sir John Jardine, *Notes on Buddhist Law* (1882, reprint 1903), notes six classes of judges, only three of which were associated with government. "First, there are the parties themselves who may agree together to some decision of their cause; secondly, they may appoint one or more arbitators of their own; thirdly, there is the unpaid but officially appointed and recognized arbitrator whose court is termed *khong*. (*purd* during Mindon's reign). Above this is the Court of the district officer; then the chief Civil Court at the capital; and finally, the king."

24) "The Record of Kyaukmaw Myo," Appendix Ib in Furnivall, *op, cit.*, pp. 236-243.

is no evidence to indicate that this concept connotes a different meaning than it did under the Burmese kings. Rather, the idea of collective opinion, of general belief, *ayu-ahsa* and *atwe-akhaw*, is used for the political action within the community. There were, within the village political process, then, two ways by which individual influence and leadership were sanctioned: debate, or participation through a conscious evaluation and expression of opinion on local issues; and aribitrary command by leaders of extended families because of their status and leader roles within the community. Any social ethic is based on repeated confirmation of learned norms, thus there is credence to a hypothesis that the Burman *athin* tradition encouraged men to feel differently towards those from outside the village community. Only the sanction of magic or religion could draw different *athin* together to support one of their own who aspired to reach beyond his community.

We have just demonstrated that community political authority was founded upon primordial norms, norms which divided a potentially large political community in mechanical fashion below the level of the *myo*. It was based on two different concepts of polities. Students of Theravada have now found that the Burman version of the religion is highly influenced by local animistic cults and earlier vulgarized Mahayana tenets. Evidence is overwhelming that exoteric practice has always been quite dissimilar from the doctrine in Theravada Pali texts. For that reason the *dhammathats* yield only an formal version of ethics that fail to reveal the political values Burmans actually held.[25]

THE POLITICAL FUNCTION OF MONASTIC EDUCATION

A preliminary answer to the question of what norms Burmans actually lived by is found in the method and content of the traditional education. Comments by students of Burmese culture over the past century provide us with insights into the education.

The method of transmitting knowledge in monarchial Burma was more comparable to the practice in the Greek states than in any other Western political order. *Myo* capitals, the towns, were not only trading centers and the hub of local political activity, but contained monasteries which housed the *sayadaws* (great teachers) of the locale. Villages had their own mendicants, of course, but the more able scholars and teachers were often asked to preside in *myo* monasteries or in Pali *tekkatoes*, the Buddhist

25) Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class* (1939 ed., New York) p. 329 ff.

colleges. Traditions of glorious scholarship and attainment were associated with particular *myo* and *ywa kyaungs* (monasteries). All male children were educated in local monastaries and underwent higher training in Theravada doctrine for short periods as youths and as young men. Any adult male could go into the sects at will for as long a period as he desired. The monastery performed both an educative and a socializing function,[26] while tending to ethicize all activity.

The center of discourse and learning were dispersed in the centers of learning in the provincess at or near such town as Pakkoku, Monywa, Taungdwingyi, Myingyan, Prome or Thaton. The learned *sayadaw* remained in the *Kyaung* except when he served in the metropolis around the court in the reign of great kings, as at Pagan from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, Ava and Amurapura in the eighteenth century, and Mandalay for three decades in the ninteenth century; but the metropolis quickly collapsed under weak kings. The intellectual tradition was harbored in the monasteries. Many village *kyaungs* were built and also disappeared in one or two generations of monks, however, in the most sacred monastaries there accumulated through the centuries copies of earlier palm leaf manuscripts (which lasted only 100-200 years) on many aspects of knowledge. Occasionally the leading *sayadaws* were called upon to travel and expound their treatises, but more frequently the reputation of a great teacher was established through his disciples who propagated his views in their own monasteries.

Within the Theravada sects an examination system tended to stabilize and bureaucratise the religious institution.[27] Nevertheless, considerable freedom of interpretation was allowed those who wrote about temporal conduct in the *nitis*, out of which developed a historic dialogue concerning the *mangala sutta*, the beatitudes of social life. A schism emerged between the *dhammathats* and *nitis* as references for a code of conduct. To live by a particular *niti* might very well conflict with the *dhamma*. The two ways of life are still separated today in two concepts: *law-ki-acho*, to live in accordance with the *niti*, and *law-ko-ke-tara*, to live by the *dhamma*, yet both institutions have a metaphysical foundation.

So thorough was the responsiblity of the monks for social as well as religious

26) A proliferation of sects never developed in Burma. Since the Mon Period there has been only one substantial division and that remains today between the doctrinaire and those who seek to popularize the code. The dominant contemporary sects are *Shwe-kyin*, the orthodox clerical order, and *Thudhamma*, the more liberal sect.

27) Clifford Geertz, *Old Societies and New States*, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1963. p. 119.

education that parents transferred to the monasteries all obligation for teaching normative values apart from those of the family. Transmission of the more abstract political ideas concerning civic duty and rights, as well, was primarily the task of the monks. Only the parental and kin responsibility for instruction in the specific features of familial cooperation and obligations appears never to have been assumed by the monastery education system; with this major reservation one can assert that the ethic of the political community was created and transmitted by the Buddhist sects.

THE POLITICAL FUNCTION OF BURMESE THERAVADA VALUES

There is considerable elucidation in Pali scriptures of values that sustain the kind of political life which evolved in Buddhist Burma. The Buddhist first principles were successfully preserved by the generations of venerable *sayadaws*. However Theravada is not a philosophy designed for a secular society and power-oriented men. Its end is the suspension of individual suffering. Its means is the intellectualization of the human being. This oversimlification of the end-means context of Theravada inadequately describes its philosophic expression but it provides a basic assumption for analysing the political function of the doctorine.

The esoteric Theravada doctrines encouraged development of a value pattern that desocialized the individual who believed in the tenets. "Sitting alone, lying down alone, walking alone without ceasing, and alone subduing himself, let a man be happy near the edge of a forest." So ends a chapter in the *Dhammapada*, a key scripture. Through a variety of approaches the layman was advised or encouraged to divest himself of worldly attachment and embark on the path to *nirvana*. Wisdom, the term employed to describe the goal of earthly existence, connotes purity and love, or compassion, for the Burman Buddhist.[29] The individual gains cognitive insight, or percep-

28) The most careful study of family relations in Burma is Hazel Hitson's "Family Patterns and Paranoidal Personality" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard, 1959). Also see Mi Mi Kaing, *The Burmese Family* (Bombay, 1946) who discusses the significance of the monastery system in Burmese society; and Lucian, Hanks, "The Search For Personal Autonomy in the Burmese Personality", *Psychiatry* (1949), pp. 285-300. A fourth evaluation with considerable insight but little fresh documentation is that of Cecil Hobbs, *The Burmese Family* (Washington, D.C., 1952).

29) See the following extracts from traditional Theravada literature in C.H. Hamilton, *Buddhism*(New York, 1952): "The Buddha's First Sermon" and "The Fire Discourse" in the Questions of Malunkya-putta" in Majjhima Nikya, Sutta 63. There are abundant contemporary discourses, two of which are cited here: the Mohnyin Sayadaw's *Dittha Vipassana* (*Cognitive Insight Exercises*) (Rangoon, 1955), pp. 30-44; and Egerton Baptist, *The Supreme Science of The Buddha* (Colombo, 1955), pp. 16-18.

tion, through mental exercises that freed the mind of non-real temporal attachments such as pleasure, sense experience, passion, and all impure qualities born out of involvement in worldly affairs. Reliable cognition was intuitive, and was the only true knowledge. The man who meditates, who contemplates, was most likely to command the methods of gaining knowledge and thus attain wisdom. Such mental discipline was not meant to encourage the ascetic existence of the recluse. On the contrary, the individual who was fortunate enough to gain a degree of enlightenment was obliged to pass on his method and insight to others. Such a man was the *saya*, or teacher.

The most esteemed in Burmese literature was the teacher, for he led the individual out of an existence stimulated by temporal or environmental conditions and into one where the self blended with an eternal continuum. The teacher's doctrinal duty was to participate in society in order to guide his listeners towards a true realization of the self. By this ideal, one surmounted relations with others and placed himself, as a negated self, in direct relationship with absolute truth. Because of his duty teacher-monk occupied a pre-eminent position in the community. When he conceived of truth as a relative concept, rather than absolute, he was able to incorporate his ideas in the *nitis* and the code of civil conduct suggested by the term *law-ki-acho*. Thus the *saya*, by maintaining his authority as a religious figure, also functioned as the translator of social norms into a pattern of values that provided the political community with an ethic.

Richard Gard, a student of Pali, has noted a number of features in the ethical literature derived from Theravada which are fundamental political propositions and which I have found applicable to the Burmese community. These include a social compact which established property rights with an ethical explanation for the rise of class-divisions in village life; a ruler-contract theory of kingship which protected property rights; *a concept of kingship as a necessary social institution established because of imperfect human conditions and designed to ensure individual and collective security*; *a concept of decentralized political authority localized and preserved in village councils and Buddhist monastic administration* (see "full and frequent public assemblies" in the *Maha Parinibbana-sutta*); the science of politics as the expression in human affairs of universal righteousness but subordinate to and governed by an ethic for the ruler and subjects alike; the theory that kings, or government, could be removed as illegitimate if they disqualified themselves through unrighteous conduct; and finally, evolve-

ment of a theory that rulership required qualifications identified with cosmological terms that elevated the monarch to a super-human, omniscent position whereby he became a *bodhisattva*, or aspirant to Buddhahood.[30]

It must be emphasized that secular writings were secondary to the flood of manuscripts dealing with Pali grammer and the three major canonical texts, the *Vinaya*, *Sutta*, and *Abhidhamma*. Canonical literature constituted the bulk of Burma's intellectual tradition from the time when monks of the Pyu race first incorporated Theravada into their order up to the middle of the nineteenth century. Only a minor key in this tradition was the social code of conduct founded upon mystic righteousness. Still, it is that righteousness which is the heart of Burmese monarchial constitution.

CONCLUSION

The evolution of Burma's monarchial political tradition, its language, its constitution, its aristocracy, its dichotomy between village and capital, its educational system, and perhaps most important in our time, its esoteric and exoteric values, was a significant event. That tradition undergirds the Burman "way of life" which plays an exceedingly dynamic role in modern Burma. It provides a reality and a vision to leaders who search for the elements of themselves that they share with peasants. That tradition may well play them false when the final history of Burma is written, for it failed to create cohesion within the empire even under the strongest kings. But modern Burma is founded upon another political tradition that theoretically could compensate for the weakness in the first. That, of course, is the colonial system of government which we shall now analyze. That system brought administrative unity to Burma. As we have already emphasized, it was precisely that element, bureaucracy and a common law, which monarchial Burma lacked. Consider how that administration functioned and how its structure evolved under the British.

30) Discussed by Richard A. Gard in a paper presented at the Asian Association annual conference, 1960, "An Introduction To the Study of Buddhism and Poltiical Authority In South And Southeast Asia."